

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7028 of the First Extraordinary Session

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to recognize Shiloh Presbyterian Church on the occasion of its 154th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the churches of our nation have been an integral part of our history as a people and have had an unparalleled impact in forming and maintaining a stable and just society; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic and historic community of faith is Shiloh Presbyterian Church, the members of which are celebrating the church's 154th anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, Shiloh Presbyterian Church traces its inception back to just after the Civil War; during a May 1865 meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Dr. A. Garnett and John B. Reeves were commissioned to visit the South and Southwest to help organize congregations of African Americans whose views were aligned with the Presbyterian Church; and

WHEREAS, at that time, few individuals of color belonged to the First and Second Presbyterian Churches of Knoxville; eleven such members from Second Presbyterian Church and one from First Presbyterian Church met with Dr. Reeves as well as Reverend Samuel Sawyers and Reverend R.P. Wells on September 4, 1865, and organized "The First Colored Presbyterian Church of Knoxville," now known as Shiloh Presbyterian Church, and David Scaggs and Levi Lilliston were elected and ordained elders; and

WHEREAS, the other charter members were Thomas Allison, Fannie Coffin, Neptune Coffin, Harriet Emmett, Margaret Nelson, Charles Simmons, Jane Rhea, Margaret Turner,

Hamilton Walker, Mary Walker, Mary Bell, Henderson Dunbar, Peter Edmonston, William H. Powell, Edward Houston, Margaret Houston, Edward Livingston, James Mason, Sanford Mason, William Nelson, Henderson Alexander, and Mary Jane Scaggs; and

WHEREAS, on February 9, 1866, Reverend George W. LeVere became pastor of the newly organized church, serving for eighteen years; during this time, he built a Sabbath School and increased church membership. The congregation worshiped at First Presbyterian Church, which was not in use at the time, until February 1867; and

WHEREAS, the cornerstone of the church's first permanent edifice, a frame building, was laid on August 2, 1867, on a lot at the corner of West Clinch Avenue and Henley Street; by 1875, the congregation had outgrown that structure, and a new one was erected. They worshiped there until the building was destroyed by fire on February 1, 1912; and

WHEREAS, the congregation held services in the chapel of Mayers Industrial School until a new building was completed on September 1, 1912; this new edifice served the growing membership until 1928, when the City of Knoxville purchased it for the purpose of widening Henley Street; and

WHEREAS, after returning to the chapel of Mayers Industrial School, the church held services at Gem Theater at the corner of East Vine Avenue and Central Street until the new building on East Church Street at Lithgoe Street was completed. This edifice was dedicated on July 6, 1930, and Reverend A.H. George was called as pastor; and

WHEREAS, in 1967, Shiloh Presbyterian Church was once again uprooted by the City of Knoxville and its Urban Renewal Program; the church purchased property at Biddle Street, and the congregation worshiped in a frame house located on the property until the current church building was completed in 1968. Reverend Frank R. Gordon, who served the church for twenty-three years, was serving as pastor at that time; and

WHEREAS, since its founding, Shiloh Presbyterian Church has been blessed with capable and compassionate ministers; the reverends who served the church since 1865 are Dr. George LeVere, John R. Reeves, J.C. Lawrence, Dr. J.R. Riley, John S. Byers, Dr. J.S. Holley, Dr. Samuel A. Downer, Dr. A.H. George, Thomas H. Jenkins, H. Waite Stennett, Frank R.

Gordon, Dr. Donald Grohman, Dr. Sidney E. Davis, Sr., Michael E. Askew, Stone Carr, Gloria Mencer, and Sidney E. Davis, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, this September, Shiloh Presbyterian Church will observe 154 years of Christian service to the Knoxville community; the guest speaker will be Reverend Victor King, who grew up in Shiloh and is the son of Elder Almetor King; and

WHEREAS, Shiloh Presbyterian Church continues to be a light in the community, and the devout members of the congregation faithfully strive to carry out God's work in the world; and

WHEREAS, as a powerful tool in the service of the Kingdom of God, Shiloh Presbyterian Church is truly one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and nation, and the members of this exceptional congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and to the good people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join in the celebration of the 154th anniversary of Shiloh Presbyterian Church, thank the good people of this historic congregation and their ministers for their notable service to their Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.